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Integrity

puerto rico, u. s. a.



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Two articles in this issue concern the Puerto Ricans in New York City where over 90% of the Puerto Ricans on the mainland are concentrated. However, we feel sure that this issue is of more than local interest, as the necessity of accepting Puerto Ricans into American life is of more than local concern. While there are approximately 600,000 Puerto Ricans in greater New York, there are splinter groups in other cities from here to California. Eighteen dioceses number sizeable groups of Puerto Ricans among their permanent residents.

One may wonder about the great concentration of Puerto Ricans in already overcrowded New York. Why don't they spread out over the country, live on the land or in small towns, rather than in a gigantic metropolis? Like other newcomers before them—the Irish, Germans, Italians—they huddle together for protection, for companionship, for love and understanding in a strange land. Puerto Ricans especially are gregarious, used to moving in a circle of one hundred or so relatives and friends. To move alone (or with one's immediate family) to a new place in the states requires a change in social habits even more violent than the uprooting from the island itself. But, for groups of Puerto Ricans to be accepted into small communities requires a re-education for the residents which the native New Yorker, used to tidal waves of "strangers" can pretty much do without. That is not to say that New Yorkers have wholly accepted Puerto Ricans, or to imply that they have taken them to heart. (As Catholics we reluctantly remark that parishes in "better" neighborhoods of New York seem totally indifferent to their hardships—that is, when the parishioners are not complaining of having to brush up against Puerto Ricans in the subways.) But at least New Yorkers have recognized the fact that they are here to stay. One can hope that this negative acceptance will give way to sympathetic understanding and even positive approval, so that public opinion will give the Puerto Ricans such a good press in New York that they will be able to move away from New York—into smaller communities more conducive to health, family life and general well-being, as well as preservation of traditional religious values.

We call your attention to the review of *Transformation* in this issue. Father Kelly's review is not intended to be a summary of the contents of this book, but is, we think, a remarkable accomplishment in expressing in a few words through direct citation the misunderstanding which exists between "the Church" and "the Government" in Puerto Rico. Discriminating readers of INTEGRITY will see how it is possible for both parties to talk without understanding each other, and consequently, to impute unworthy motives to each other.

from our readers

To the Editor:

I have just finished reading your May issue of *Integrity* (on men). I certainly think you are to be congratulated on your excellent analysis of a very difficult problem. . . . I am somewhat curious as to how it is possible to devote the entire magazine to discussions of men and their social responsibilities without in some way indicating that NCCM is the one national organization appointed by the Bishops to foster a program of Catholic Action among all men's organizations in the country. For example, it might have been interesting to your readers to know that for the past 5 years NCMM's work through its affiliates has increased over 300%... *Martin H. Work*, Executive Director

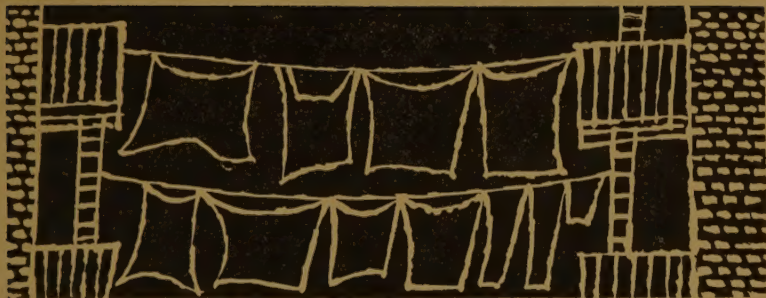
National Council of Catholic Men, Wash., D.C.

To the Editor:

As a mother of future men I'd like to give a few of my thoughts. As a woman, and a European on top of it, I look at the subject in a little different light. . . . Now it seems to me that in bringing up children there is too much emphasis put on the equality of the sexes, which is not quite a Christian concept. As both sexes mature at different times and have different interests, why not bring out the definite feminine qualities in girls and the masculine qualities in boys, instead of mingling everything into one melting pot? And should not schools and homes endeavor to train the minds, the hearts and the bodies of both sexes more inwardly? It seems that students from their early years on, are forced into a pattern which is often detrimental to their genuine character and personality. . . . Would it not be much more Christian if teen-age boys would try to learn all they can, in science, in practical creative work, about nature and so on (music and fine arts included), instead of wasting those very important, valuable years with silly parties, dating and sitting before television or movies? Then those boys would mature, would have more self-confidence, and last but not least, the girls would surely look up to them and respect them more.

In so many modern families I observe that the head of the family takes some job, because he has never learned anything right, often dislikes it or is even disgusted with it, then he comes home, helps out in the kitchen, not with enthusiasm, but like a housemaid that has nothing else to do, then he might sit around and stare at television or work around the house. This sounds pretty peaceful and relaxing, but it is no kind of a life for a man. Men are only really satisfied and are really men, when they think for themselves, do something creative, live their own individual lives, in other words, not become a "Good Joe" type that exists rather than lives, and has to cater constantly to his surroundings . . .

Barbara Hewitt, Gulfport, Miss.



Sylvia Martinez

how it feels to be a puerto rican

*A young Puerto Rican New Yorker
gives a frank account of her reactions.*

Some time ago, I started dating a young man who, when I first met him, knew only that I was Spanish. He didn't ask me where I was from, and I didn't think it made any difference. I was to find out how wrong I was. This discovery eventually led to the end of our friendship. When I told him that my parents were Puerto Rican and that I had been born on the island, he was shocked. That had never occurred to him. Why hadn't it occurred to him, and why did he find it so hard to believe? Because he had the same wrong idea about Puerto Ricans that so many people have; I am white and speak English without an accent.

I began to notice a gradual change in his attitude toward me. I realized that like others he too felt that Puerto Ricans were different. He was under the impression that they came here "like men out of Mars" to invade—and even take over—this city of which he was so rightly proud. He once remarked that they would be better off if they stayed at home. What right had he to feel so superior? Had it ever occurred to him that Puerto Ricans have as much right to live here as anybody else? Couldn't he understand that they are no different from the forty million immigrants that had preceded them, except that the Puerto Ricans are not immigrants but Americans by birth? Did he ever think of the disillusionment experienced by average Puerto Ricans

who come here to make their homes and are treated as though they didn't belong?

I think it's about time that a Puerto Rican explained their reactions to living here, in view of the fact that so much has been written by non-Puerto Ricans and not enough has been said by Puerto Ricans themselves.

my grandparents arrive

My grandparents were among the first Puerto Ricans to migrate to this city around the time of the first World War. They managed to open a restaurant in the Chelsea area of New York which, at that time, was the only place where Puerto Ricans lived. They were so grateful for the opportunity to make a life for themselves that they tried to help others. Many were the people who would order half a meal at their restaurant because they couldn't afford any more; others couldn't even afford that much. They were never turned away.

The building in which their business was located was torn down and though they made every attempt to start a new one, they were not successful. This was due in part to the fact that there was at that time a very small Puerto Rican colony here. You couldn't expect other people to acquire a sudden taste for Puerto Rican food. After a while they were able to find work in a well-known hotel here. My grandmother polished silver and my grandfather, because of his restaurant experience, was put in charge of the dining rooms.

It took a great deal of courage for them to survive, because of the many handicaps which they had to overcome. Their limited knowledge of the English language, the fact that there were few Spanish-speaking people here, and the different customs, made life harder for them.

Shortly after my birth, my parents decided to come to New York. I was born in San Germán, one of the most beautiful towns on the island and better known as "the town of hills." Not only can it boast of the oldest Church in the Western World, "Porta Coeli," but it has also given a great many religious to the Church. I don't know if you will understand, but every time I visit San Germán, I feel that I have "come home," although my home is in New York and I have lived here all my life. But then, that is the way most Puerto Ricans feel when they return to the island. You wonder why they leave such a beautiful place where the climate is so ideal. Try to imagine twelve months of

spring nights and summer days, and you have a pretty good idea of what it's like. Most of the people have their own homes, even if many are modest wooden huts, and life is not as hectic as it is in a gigantic city like New York. Believe me, they don't come here because they have the wanderlust, or to go on relief as it is usually claimed. True, there are some among them who are not particularly interested in working hard and abuse the help that is proffered them. But most come to find opportunities for themselves and their families, which are not always available on the island. That is the same reason why my parents, and my grandparents before them, came here.

My father is a printer by trade and this kind of work was scarce in Puerto Rico. Because of the language problem, it was difficult for him to find employment here. Necessity forced him to accept jobs as an unskilled worker. When work in a particular place became slow, he was among the first to be laid off. After a great many disappointments he eventually found a job as a printer.

the new life

My parents learned to adapt themselves to this new life but it was not easy. Modest though it may have been, they had a decent home in Puerto Rico. They were accustomed to being surrounded by trees and flowers. Their neighbors were people whom they had known all their lives and who were always willing to give a helping hand. Sundays meant Mass, a walk in the plaza and a chance to greet their friends. Celebrations, music and gaiety, were always a part of their life. Here, on the contrary, they had to contend with all kinds of weather. They had to live in small, badly ventilated apartments, usually overlooking back yards with their inevitable overflowing garbage cans. Their neighbors didn't know or seem to care that they existed and they never knew who lived next door. Sundays still meant Mass—and then, the emptiness that comes to people when they are in a new place and don't know anybody. Puerto Ricans celebrate Christmas Eve instead of Christmas Day. After midnight Mass everybody goes home to a "cena" or feast. *Aguinaldos* are sung and parties go on until the early hours of the morning. A new outfit is a must and even the poorer people manage to buy new clothing and have some kind of celebration. My parents had to spend many a lonely Christmas Eve when they first came here. They had no one to help them celebrate this great holiday in their tradition.

Winters were more severe then than they are now. One winter part of the family was overcome by an escape of gas. It was one of the many times that my father had to go out in bad weather to find a doctor. Once he did locate one, he had difficulty explaining in his limited English the nature of the illness in the family.

After my grandfather's death, my grandmother became ill and had to leave her job. She no longer had a steady income, but it was taken for granted that she would live with us. My mother went to work in order to help meet expenses.

housing problems

Every addition to the family meant that we would need a larger apartment. It was this need which first made us aware of the degree of discrimination which existed against Puerto Ricans. Whenever we heard of a vacancy, one or both of my parents would have to take time off from work, without pay, only to be disappointed over and over again. When they first inquired, a great deal of interest would be shown in renting, (this was during the depression) with offers of concessions, repairs, painting, etc. That was until it was found that the prospective tenants were Puerto Ricans. Once that had penetrated, they would be put off. The person to whom they happened to be speaking was either expecting another party who had called just five minutes before they got there, or he had to speak to his partners, or maybe he was just the agent and had to make sure that the landlord hadn't already rented the apartment to someone else. Whom did they think they were fooling?

We finally succeeded in renting an apartment from a man who at least was independent and didn't have to consult anyone. However, it did leave a great deal to be desired. The advertisement said all latest improvements, but his idea of improvements was not the same as ours. It turned out to be a cold water flat with no heat, but we were desperate and he knew it. He charged an exorbitant rent.

By the time the youngest child was born, there were eight of us in the family and we had really outgrown the apartment. Once again we went through the same routine looking for a larger place. When we found something that suited us, we were usually met with the same excuses. It got so that we preferred to live uncomfortably rather than humiliate ourselves. Since we did need a bigger place, we decided to move to a section of East Harlem which is affectionately called "el

barrio" by Puerto Ricans, but is actually a miniature melting pot. We lived there until the neighborhood started to deteriorate, both physically and morally. The streets were no longer safe for anyone. People were exposed to a great many dangers and lived in fear all the time. Sex fiends and other characters were menaces, who roamed around freely. Along with my three sisters I was accompanied to school every day. After classes my mother or a neighbor would be waiting to take us home. Under no circumstances were we ever allowed out of our parents' sight. We could no longer play in the streets. We were always on the alert; always dreading the thought that we might be the next victims to meet with foul play. My father was followed to his place of business several times by would-be muggers. A friend of the family died shortly after being brutally beaten by two men. It became imperative that we move out, but that was easier said than done.

It took a long time and a great deal of looking before we found an apartment. It was in a two-family house in a nice section of the Bronx. Several acquaintances we made told us as a friendly gesture that we were the first "Spanish" family to live in that section.

We were a quiet family who never caused any trouble, yet we began to hear that people were complaining because we were allowed to live there. They had threatened to move unless we did. We were hurt and couldn't believe that people really felt that way. We ignored these rumors until the owner told us that she needed the apartment for herself because she had sold her house. She gave us 30 days in which to move. What defense did we have? It was her property. Some time later I happened to be in the neighborhood and found another family living there.

in school

My school days weren't exactly free of abuse either. Have you ever resented being called a "dirty so and so"? Well, I resented being called a "dirty spic," yet I was called this all the time by other children. At first I tried not to let it bother me, but after a while it got to be too much for me to take and I fought back. When I think back today I realize that it wasn't the fault of the children but of the parents. What could you expect if that was what they heard in the home?

One day the biology teacher had to leave the room for a few minutes. During her absence my classmates thought it would be fun to play a prank on her. One of the girls had just put a thumbtack on her

chair when they heard her footsteps. They all ran for their seats but I was not quite so fast. Although biology was one of my best subjects, she failed me. As though that weren't enough, I was called before the principal to explain *my* misconduct. Why was I singled out for discipline when I had only been on the sidelines watching what was going on? Could it be that I was the only Puerto Rican in the class? It was my word against teacher's and she, of course, won. I had to humiliate myself and write her a letter telling her how sorry I was for what had happened, before she gave me a passing mark. Her hurt was physical; mine went deeper.

I always say that I was destined to become a secretary. Unfortunately, my typing teacher was slightly prejudiced. 65 was the passing grade, she gave me 64. Yet today I am a highly paid Spanish-English secretary in a well-known organization where speed and accuracy in typing are essential.

I finished school, and started to haunt employment agencies. How many times was I told that a firm was in desperate need of a girl and I seemed to be just the type they were looking for. But after being interviewed I would be told that my application would be kept on file and they would let me know. They could have saved themselves the trouble of lying by saying, "We don't hire Puerto Ricans." I could have lied about my place of birth on the applications, but I wasn't ashamed of it.

I went to work for a Spanish newspaper. The hours were long and the salary low, but it helped me to acquire confidence and experience. I had made up my mind that I had just as much right to get ahead as anyone else.

family life

Remarks have been made to the effect that Puerto Ricans have big families as a protection against starvation in old age. Have these people ever stopped to think that Puerto Ricans have big families because they feel that material possessions cannot make up for the affection of a family? They know that it is the one thing that cannot be stolen, destroyed by fire or replaced, and that it will be there long after everything else has disappeared. This is the security they want in their old age.

Puerto Ricans are gay people by nature. Their lives revolve around the family and everything becomes a family affair. Happiness

and sorrow are shared. Anyone who comes from a big family knows that it has its heartbreaks, but it also has its rewards. Our family was no exception. There were many things that we had to do without. I seldom had new clothing; I inherited my sisters'. I remember the first doll I got and how I treasured it for years. Going to the movies was a rare privilege. Things which today children take for granted and consider their due, such as vacations in the country, allowances, birthday parties, etc., are things we never missed because we just didn't have them. Yet I wouldn't have traded places with any of the *only* children I knew, because in spite of all they had they were lonely. Our lives were filled with happy, sad and sometimes almost tragic moments. For the simple reason that we were so many and shared everything, our lives were fuller. We could even laugh at our financial situation.

we're not statistics

Last year I was asked to give an orientation talk to a group of recently arrived Puerto Ricans. During my talk they were unusually quiet although there were many children present. I thought this indicated boredom on their part. I found out later that they were quiet because they were eager to absorb every bit of information which would help them to get ahead. I was amazed at the number of questions they asked. They were interested in getting information on schools for their children. They wanted to know about courses they could take which would help them to live more useful lives here. They asked questions on health, their legal rights and what they could do to contribute to the work of their community.

It brought me to the realization that it is about time that the public woke up to the facts. Puerto Ricans are getting tired of being called a "problem." We are not statistics; we are human beings with the same feelings and human weaknesses that everybody else has. Puerto Ricans have a great deal to contribute to this country just as those who came before them had much to contribute. You cannot expect people to accept your ways unless you are willing to accept what they have to offer. It is a mutual give and take. The newly arrived Puerto Ricans must be given help and understanding if they are expected to integrate or assimilate. Spanish-speaking personnel alone is not needed, but rather native Puerto Ricans who not only speak their language but understand their customs and their ways.

John Doe can butcher his mother and throw the pieces into a

furnace, yet nothing is said in newspaper accounts of his nationality. But just let a Puerto Rican do the slightest thing wrong and immediately the newspapers make a big issue about the person's being a Puerto Rican, even putting it in headlines. We are always referred to as a "problem" on the mainland, but no mention is ever made of the "problem" which is presenting itself with the "migration" of non-Puerto Ricans to the island, adding to the already existing congestion. Their influence and example have done a great deal to contribute to a breakdown in Spanish and Catholic customs and traditions.

Puerto Ricans themselves are beginning to think it is a disgrace to be Puerto Rican. I know many young people who have moved to the suburbs who will never admit that they are Puerto Rican. They won't speak Spanish and don't allow their children to speak it. As a result, these children never learn to speak their mother tongue.

As a member of the Legion of Mary, I work actively among the Puerto Ricans in my parish. I have visited their homes and am well aware of the conditions under which they are forced to live, sometimes seven in a room sharing a bath with five other families, yet they are paying fantastic rents. They cannot be blamed; they have to have a place to live. I understand because my family was subjected to this same kind of exploitation. And yet, I am criticized for trying to help these unfortunate ones by those Puerto Ricans who have risen in the world and have forgotten what it is like to be exploited.

A great deal of my visits have to do with the religious instruction of children. Although the parents are anxious that their children receive a good religious education, somehow their release time cards get lost. Why is it that more of these cards get lost for Puerto Rican children than for others? Is it because the persons responsible in the public schools think that Puerto Ricans will not bother to check up on them?

Most Puerto Ricans prefer that their children be educated in parochial schools, yet they are usually told that because their children had gone before to public school they do not know enough to meet parochial school standards. Another excuse for not admitting them is that preference must be given to the older parishioners.

Many children refuse to go to religious instructions because they are mistreated. Their religious instructors do not understand them and in their anger treat them harshly. This, of course, makes the children hostile and frightened.

When I was in school, I remember a girl asking me where I was

from. I told her that I was a Puerto Rican. She looked surprised and said, "But you are not colored, you are white." Today, I am still not taken for a Puerto Rican. People insist on remarking that I don't "look like a Puerto Rican." Just what is a Puerto Rican supposed to look like? We are a people of many blood strains. But whether we look "colored" or "white," has nothing to do with our rights as human beings and American citizens.

I have just finished reading *Transformation: the Story of Modern Puerto Rico*, by Earl Parker Hanson which deals with advances made in Puerto Rico and by Puerto Ricans. I was very gratified that at last someone understands our problems and is giving us credit for our achievements.

Although I have always lived here and have become a part of this city, I still feel at times that I am not fully accepted. This is the way most Puerto Ricans feel, but we will not give up the struggle.

As for me, personally, I can only say that I am proud of being a Puerto Rican and will be proud of it until I die; even if I die an old maid in the attempt!

Barbara L. Samson

Apology

Shriven,
 we kneel,
 already crowding grace
 with now, tonight, tomorrow. . . .
 We hold to forgiveness
 momentarily,
 as to tinsel soon dimmed:
 with prayers of contrition
 still wavering in thin breaths,
 we are polarized to the next sin;
 blatantly we say "Lord, Lord,"
 (convincing ourselves by the sound),
 and strike the other cheek.
 We come a thousand, thousand times again,
 to stifling thickness of confessional—
 and to hope.



Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, S.J.

catholic responsibilities and new york's puerto ricans

*A striking comparison of Puerto Ricans
with previous immigrants to New York City is made
by the Chairman of the Sociology Department at
Fordham University.*

Almost a hundred years before Hendrick Hudson took possession of New York in the name of the Dutch, a Spanish mariner, Esteban Gomes, sailing for the King of Spain, found his way into New York harbor, looked around a bit, decided it wasn't promising enough, and sailed away. It is interesting to speculate what might have happened if Esteban had stayed and if the Spanish had begun to colonize what is now Manhattan Island.

Strangely enough, the spot that did not become a Spanish settlement then shows many more signs of being a kind of Spanish settlement now. The language is heard in every corner of the city; many a bus might be travelling a main route in San Juan, so many of its passengers are Puerto Rican; and riders on the East side or the Broadway subways will find the language quite as common as Italian or Yiddish must have been fifty years ago.

For, the newest of the New Yorkers have been arriving in fairly large numbers in recent years, and New York is conscious that the

latest of the great migrations to the city has been under way. At the beginning of 1955, it was estimated that more than half a million Puerto Ricans were living in the city, that is, either people born in Puerto Rico or children born here to Puerto Rican parents. During 1954 the number coming from the island dropped off sharply, but latest reports indicate that the trend has reversed again and that 1955 may see almost as many coming from the island as came during the record year of 1953.

Of course, this has raised a cry of distress from the older citizens of the city. Those who are more favorably disposed toward the Puerto Ricans think it is unfortunate that they should be allowed to come to an overcrowded city and live in poor conditions. Something should be done to keep them on their beautiful island, or at least to get them out to other sections of the country. Those less favorably disposed repeat the familiar accusations that they are the cause of our delinquency, that they ruin every neighborhood they move into, that they will not learn English and mingle with "Americans"; in brief, that with the coming of the Puerto Ricans, the great experience that was New York is coming to an end.

This is familiar criticism to one who knows something of previous migrations to the city. The same accusations have been levelled at every new people as they arrived. Yet each new group has brought new energy, new ideas, a new challenge that would not let the city rest. New York is much more New York in 1955 than it was in 1855, and it is what it is because the stranger came from the cities of England and Germany, from the hills of Ireland and the farms of southern Italy. There is every reason to hope that New York will continue to be great as the Puerto Ricans lend a touch of Latin America to the mingling of the nations that has made the city what it is.

To Catholics in particular this new migration offers a great challenge, but an even greater promise. The day is not far past when all our people were strangers themselves in this strange land. As the children of immigrant peoples, there should be no one more alert or anxious than the Catholics of the city to understand what a migration means, and to receive the newcomers who seek to share the blessings that God has so abundantly given to us. But furthermore, the Puerto Ricans are Catholics themselves. If they are accepted into the community of Catholics in the city, they will become an important and dynamic part of the life of the Church in the next generation. If they are not accepted, and many of them lost to the faith, the responsibility

will rest heavily on our consciences in the years ahead.

In examining the nature of this migration, it is important to keep it in perspective. Actually, in numbers, it cannot begin to compare with the great migrations of the past. Thus far only about half a million Puerto Rican-born have come to all parts of the United States. But during the great migrations, more than six million German-born came here; almost five million Italian-born and more than four and a half million Irish-born. The Puerto Ricans have a long way to go before they begin to match the movement of peoples from Europe in the past. Nor is there any need to fear an avalanche of people from the island. They come from a tiny island, no larger than Long Island. There are 2,400,000 people in the island population. If they all came, it would still not amount to a migration comparable to those of earlier years.

Puerto Ricans on relief

Secondly, in estimating their impact on the city's life, it is important to keep in mind the experience of earlier people. The earlier migrations were a much heavier burden on the life and resources of the people of New York. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties and conflicts, New York residents received the earlier immigrants with surprising charity and generosity. New York has been a great, great city. In the early days of the city's history, many of the eastern states had laws forbidding ship captains from unloading poor immigrants at their shores. On their way to those states, the ship captains would stop at New York to leave the immigrants at this port which would never turn them away. New York received them, sheltered them, poured out money to care for them. As early as 1790, the largest single item on the city's budget was the relief of the poor. In 1796, the Commissioners of the Almshouse reported that this expense was the result of "... the prodigious influx of immigrants into the City ..." and cited as an example the Irish immigrants "... many of whom having paid their last shilling to the captain, are landed destitute and emaciated."¹ If it was this way in 1796, one can imagine what it must have been when the flood of immigration began to sweep in fifty years later. There were 40 Irishmen on relief in 1785, 148 in 1796, and 2000 in 1855.² Relief, it seems, is no new phenomenon in the city's history. This must be

¹S. L. Pomeranz, *New York, An American City* (N. Y., 1938) pp. 333-34.

²Robt. Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City* (N. Y., 1949) p. 40.

kept in mind by anyone who wishes to estimate the significance of Puerto Ricans on relief. Considering the difficulties which the Puerto Ricans face, the number on relief is surprisingly small.³ Granted that the nature of relief has changed considerably in the last century, nevertheless, it seems that children of former immigrants should only rightly look upon this generosity as a means to repay the debt that we owe for the great generosity shown to our own people when they came. There is little doubt that social historians, reviewing the behavior of New York toward the immigrants of the 19th century, will look upon the past hundred and fifty years of New York City as a social miracle.

As a matter of fact, the city was probably never as well organized or equipped to handle an influx of people as it is today. A century ago, there was no public housing, no Department of Welfare, no employment services, no organized Catholic Charities, no extensive hospital and health facilities. It is a marvel that the older immigrants survived as well as they did. Now all of these highly organized services are at hand to assist the poor and the newcomer.

Why do the Puerto Ricans come? They come for the same reason that all the earlier people came before them. They come from a very crowded island, fleeing from poverty, looking for a world that offers a better opportunity for work and advancement. The island government has been engaging in some remarkable programs for social reform, but, in a few years, has not been able to correct the difficulties which accumulated over the course of a few centuries. What is more, the Puerto Ricans are American citizens and have every right to come to the mainland unimpeded. When they arrive, they face the main problems that every immigrant group has faced before them.

housing

As with every other immigrant group, as with the Negroes and many other people today, the problem of housing for the Puerto Ricans is a terrible nightmare. These are days, certainly, when the Spirit of the

³Estimates in 1954 indicated that about 8% of the people on relief were Puerto Rican, most of them dependent children. At that time about 5% of the City's population was Puerto Rican.

cf. A. J. Jaffe (edit.) *Puerto Rican Population of New York City* (N. Y. Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia Univ. 1954) p. 47. The New York Times (6/9/55) reported Commissioner McCarthy as saying that the number of Puerto Ricans on relief has increased during the past year. Most of them were seeking "supplementary relief." They were working but not earning enough to keep their families.

Lord should be urging every conscientious soul most strongly to face the problem of housing. It is interesting to note how concerned Our Lord was about "giving homes to the homeless." When He spoke about the last judgment, He did not emphasize as the *first* law that His followers would get to Heaven because they were sober, or industrious or chaste. Rather He emphasized: "Come, ye blessed of my Father . . . When I was homeless, you took me in." Far from being zealous to keep the Puerto Ricans out, the spirit of Christ should prompt us to help them find a decent home and to protect them from becoming victims of conditions that will turn their neighborhood into a slum.

The conditions that create a slum are fairly well recognized today. One cannot simply say that Puerto Ricans or any other group create them. They move into them because they are too poor to move into better houses. Or, when they have the money, the "respectable" citizens do not want them around. They are forced to take whatever they can get. Unscrupulous landlords exploit their terrible need; put twenty families in a house that was built for ten; never fix the place properly because the Puerto Rican people cannot complain. They have no other place to go. Thus a speculating landlord can turn an apartment into a slum by overcrowding it for his own profit.⁴ I could run down the list of my Puerto Rican friends and it is a sorry litany: one had to slip a \$350 bonus to a landlady to get a meagre three-room place for five people; another paid \$1200 to buy the furniture of the apartment from the previous tenant. He then sold it all as junk for fifteen dollars. A third paid a six hundred dollar bonus to a supervisor and was trapped into an eviction a few months later. The neighbors then make it worse by running away because: "The Spanish are coming." Puerto Ricans themselves often extend this overcrowding, many times out of a desperate effort to help their relatives or friends. As long as the poor have been coming to New York, the pattern has been the same. The marvel of it is that so many Puerto Rican families can put up with these incredible surroundings, and maintain a wholesome family life in a home that they keep remarkably neat and clean despite the environment.⁵

Once again, in estimating the housing situation of the Puerto Ricans, perspective is important. Irishmen will recall with sadness the

⁴For a vivid description of the experience as it happens, cf. A. Yeziarska, "The Lower Depths of Upper Broadway," *The Reporter*, Jan. 19, 1954.

⁵cf. John McKeon's beautiful story of a fine Puerto Rican family. "The Ortiz Family," *Jubilee*, June, 1953.

old sixth ward and the "Five Points." Here where the earliest of the Irish gathered was a neighborhood notorious for bad housing, crime and disease. The better citizens shunned the spot, but thousands of good Irish families lived there, law abiding and respectable in the midst of its attics, cellars, etc., anywhere where they could find room within their tiny income. Others, Germans and Irish alike moved out to the edge of the city where they put up little shacks for themselves, the Germans in the area around Murray Hill, the Irish on the West side between fortieth and eightieth street. There was no place else to go. Cellar dwellers became a problem. Out of a population of about 500,000 in 1850, 2,900 lived in cellars. These were not the neat, trim basements of today. They were damp, unsanitary and unventilated. Water was not plentiful for washing, and sewage was inadequate if it existed at all.⁶

Italians should still be alive who remember "Mulberry Bend." The city had to level it in 1890 and turn it into a park. But, by 1890 many a poor family had spent years there. Jacob Riis gave a description of the area in 1890:

"Something like forty families are packed into five old two-story and attic houses that were built to hold five, and out in the yards, additional crowds are, or were until recently accommodated in shacks, built of all sorts of old boards and used as drying racks by the Italian stock."

This was not East Harlem, 1955. It was the lower East side, 1890. It appears that history repeats itself.

The real danger involved in all judgments about living conditions is the danger that the poor condition of a neighborhood may be turned into a moral judgment against the people themselves. Their homes appear dilapidated and worthless; therefore the people in them must be worthless too. The dirtiness of the neighborhood is attributed to something dirty or irresponsible in the people themselves, and, in a very large number of cases, this is not true. In the light of this, it is helpful to recall a Report of the Select Committee appointed to examine into the condition of tenant houses in New York and Brooklyn, 1857:

"But we must pass over without description hundreds of dilapidated, dirty and densely populated old structures which the committee inspected in different wards and which come under the head of *re-adapted, reconstructed or altered buildings*. In most

⁶Ernst. *op. cit.* p. 49.

of them the Irish are predominant as occupants, though in some streets Negroes are found swarming from cellar to garret of tottering tenant houses. In this connection it may be well to remark, that in some of the better classes of houses built for tenantry, Negroes have been preferred as occupants to Irish or German poor; the incentive of possessing comparatively decent quarters appearing to inspire the colored residents with more desire for personal cleanliness and regard for property than is impressed upon the whites of their own condition . . ."⁷

I have underlined three significant words: re-adapted, reconstructed and altered buildings. That means putting ten families in a house that was built for two; throwing up partitions in a warehouse and renting them as apartments, etc. History does not change, and the exploitation of the poor continues by the same elementary methods. The Germans and the Irish involved in this a century ago need no defense. Most of them were stable, devoted, good family people, caught in the grind of poverty in a strange world. Knowledge of their experience may help us get a new perspective with regard to the difficulties of Puerto Ricans with housing today.

delinquency

When delinquency strikes the Puerto Ricans, it is part of the problem of their "uprooting" from their native land, of being lost as strangers in a strange world. They come from a beautiful island where they are never cold, where life moves at a much more quiet pace, where they are close to the love and devotion of family, friends and neighbors. They live for the most part in little single houses of two or three rooms, away from traffic where children can run and play without care. They have never ridden on a train or seen a subway in their lives. Then they are uprooted, swept quickly into the bewildering confusion and speed and noise of New York. Not knowing the language, not familiar with our ways, they begin to know the suffering that all other immigrants have felt so acutely before them. Their lives can become disorganized, their children are taught a way of life which they, as parents, do not understand, and, if there is any weakness in the family, the slip toward delinquency can be an easy one. Unfortunately, there is a weakness in a large number of these families which leaves them exposed to these difficulties. There is a background of consensual marriages in the tra-

⁷Quoted in Edith Abbott, *Historical Aspects of the Immigration Problem*. (Chicago, 1926) p. 635.

dition of the island (a type of common law marriages) which, among other things, has not made for stability in some of the Puerto Rican families.

However, in any discussion of delinquency, a number of points must be kept in mind. In the first place, delinquency is not something that Puerto Ricans bring with them. It is something that happens to them when they get here. As we are realizing to a greater degree every day, delinquency is a characteristic of the large American city, and it is increasing alarmingly all over, in many cities where there are no Puerto Ricans as well as in cities where there are many. When the control of the family over the child weakens, the child is exposed to the types of delinquency that are prevalent here, and the sad story starts. It would be well to read the summary of the Senate Subcommittee Hearings on Juvenile Delinquency if anyone needs assurance that delinquency is not the difficulty of any particular race or class or ethnic group.⁸ It is striking all segments of American society to a very disturbing degree.

Secondly, although the types of delinquency have become more serious, it is important to keep in mind that delinquency was a problem of earlier immigrants also. Many of the police cases of a hundred years ago were teen-age boys and girls, Irish and German children, many of whom had fallen into profligacy before they were sixteen years old. There was a Report drawn up by the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives on Foreign Criminals and Paupers, 1856. This is a very biased document, unfavorable to immigrants. But, in the middle of the document, there is a report of the New York Police Chief which appears to be worthy of confidence:

"In 1849, the chief of the police department of that city called attention to the increasing number of vagrant, idle and vicious children of both sexes, growing up in ignorance and profligacy, and destined to a life of misery, shame and crime, the number of whom were given upon authority and with an exactness which claims confidence. He stated that there were then 2,955 children of the class described, known to the police in eleven patrol districts, of whom two-thirds were females between eight and sixteen years of age. Most of the children as stated at the time were of German or Irish parentage, the proportion of American born being not more than one in five. . . ."⁹

⁸Richard Clendennen & H. W. Beaser, "The Shame of America" *Sat. Eve. Post.* Jan. 8, 1955 through Feb. 5, 1955.

⁹Abbott, *op. cit.* p. 621.

If the Germans and the Irish with their remarkably strong faith, their good family life, were unable to protect some of their children from delinquency, it would be unreasonable to expect the Puerto Ricans to do better, especially since they are living in a much more troubled world. The important thing for Catholics to do in this situation is to center their attention, not on the troublesome families among the Puerto Ricans, but on the large majority of sincere and honest people who are trying to bring up their families in the midst of trying circumstances. The most effective way of helping the Puerto Ricans avoid delinquency or diminish the delinquency that exists does not consist of casting criticism at the Puerto Ricans, but of trying to make the "uprooting" a little easier through understanding, respect and charity, and of accepting them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

religious practice

Finally, it is in reference to religious practice that Catholics have a special obligation toward the Puerto Ricans. The great majority of them are Catholics. Many of them are amongst the finest Catholics of New York City. Many others, through no fault of their own, nor through any fault of the priests and religious who have labored generously among them, have never received the training in the faith which older New York Catholics have. Last year, in the New York Archdiocese, there was one priest for every 750 Catholics; in Puerto Rico, there was one priest for every 7500. In one of the large parishes on the northern coast of Puerto Rico, there are 92,000 souls, with seven priests to minister to them. The geographical area of the parish covers nearly a hundred square miles. It seems clear that there was a special providence of God in bringing the Puerto Ricans to New York to enjoy the more abundant religious advantages available here.¹⁰ It is the great challenge to the zeal and devotion of Catholics to receive the Puerto Ricans as their own. The future of the Church in New York City may someday rest in their hands. If a person examines the birth rate, that will become obvious. The birth rate of white mothers (non-Puerto Rican) in New York City in 1950 was 18.7 children per 1000 population; the birth rate of Negro mothers was 29 children per 1000 popu-

¹⁰cf. George Kelly, "The Puerto Rican and the Church of New York," *Integrity*, April, 1954, for more details on their religious experience in New York.

lation; the birth rate of Puerto Rican mothers in New York City was 49.1 per thousand population.¹¹ Even more significant than this, however, are the projections of the child population. On November 22, 1954, the New York City Planning Commission published some estimates of population trends in New York City. Between 1950 and 1970, the child population of New York City under 15 years of age is expected to increase by 292,000. During that period, however, the white child population (non-Puerto Rican) is expected to decline by 234,000; the Negro child population is expected to increase 186,000; and the Puerto Rican child population is expected to increase by 340,000. For one who has eyes to see and the mind to understand, this picture of the future is much more than a shadow. If New York is to remain a vigorously Catholic city two generations from now, it will do so only if the great majority of Puerto Ricans remain faithful to the Church.

will we give them opportunity?

This, then, is the challenge: to receive the Puerto Rican with respect as our brother or sister in Christ; to give them the opportunity to develop their Catholic life beside us, as our equals in the same school, the same parish, the same neighborhood.

The one thing that is the same in Puerto Rico and in New York is their Catholic faith. This should be the bridge to make their passage easy; this should be the link to bind us together into one. This is not easy. It has never been easy for people to welcome the stranger. But it has never been easy either to be strangers in our land. Nevertheless beneath all custom and culture is the common life of Christ that makes us one. If this is strong enough in the hearts of New York Catholics to express itself in their social relations as well as in their personal devotion, the challenge will be met, and, with God's grace, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans will give the Church new vigor in the generations to come.

¹¹Jaffe, *op. cit.* p. 34. These rates need some adjustment which is given on pp. 10-11 of the same report.



Donald L. Happe

our lady of guadalupe

*The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico
is not well-known to Catholics
in the United States
yet she is Patroness of the Americas,
and knowledge of the devotion of Guadalupe
is helpful for full understanding of
our Spanish-speaking neighbors and fellow citizens.*

By the year 1531 the City of Mexico had been occupied by the Spaniards for nine years. Montezuma was dead. The land was in comparative peace. The Aztec gods were no longer pacified by human sacrifice. Blood-encrusted priests no longer officiated in the *teocallis* which had dotted the city and other elevations across the valley. The temples had been destroyed. A new, unbloody sacrifice had been introduced.

In those days, Mexico, the city, rose from foundations laid in the vast lake which covered the floor of this great valley of the Central Plateau. The relative security of this engineered fortification had given the Aztecs a prominent advantage over the surrounding tribes. The invading Spaniard was able to enlist strong support from among these tribes who had been victimized by the Aztecs.

Leading from the fortified city were three great causeways. The causeway to the north pointed as an arrow to the first moderate hills

which marked the water's edge. This hill was named Tepeyac. Here had been enthroned a minor deity, the small stone goddess of motherhood, Tonantzin. While she had not required human sacrifice, the Spaniards still deposed her with the rest. And so, in the providence of the True God Who orders all things, Tepeyac was prepared for the erection of a temple of the new order, and the enthronement of a new goddess of motherhood.

The new sacrifice of the Christians was strange and suspect to the Indians. Only a handful of them, such as old Juan Diego and his uncle, Juan Bernardino, as the *frailes* had named them, had persisted in the understanding of this new teaching. It was difficult to resist the *frailes* who taught with gentleness and love. But it was also difficult to reconcile this gentleness and love with the harsh and often cruel practices of the Spanish rule. While Christian charity was a startlingly new experience to them, the appearance of Cortes and his strange band came as no surprise. He was expected to appear, this new white god, in fulfillment of an ancient legend, and possess this land which awaited him. Montezuma himself believed in the validity and inevitability of the legend, and it proved to be his undoing. At this point in the new affairs, neither the Indians, the *frailes*, nor, the *conquistador* had the vision to see what was ahead. Here, swiftly, would blossom a new nation; Tepeyac was to become the most hallowed spot in the Western Hemisphere. For here came, "*I, in person, Holy Mary, Ever Virgin, Mother of God.*" And in the beauty and image wherewith she came, so she remained!

The beautiful story of the apparitions of Tepeyac has been told many times. Based upon clear, authentic documentation, it does not vary; the testimony is sure. The chronology of events is too lengthy to be detailed here. For it is the first purpose of this article to introduce the reader, the pilgrim, to the vital, immediate reality of this tremendous Shrine which graces our own continent. Not without reason was Our Lady of Guadalupe appointed *Patroness of the Americas*. In the cult of Guadalupe is a powerful appeal and meaning for our time. It remains for the American but to look to the gentle Virgin of Tepeyac in order to comprehend the common and individual evils which afflict him today.

To most people of this hemisphere, the Shrine of Guadalupe is lost in the remote, turbulent, romantic land of Mexico. Mexican problems are little known, seldom understood, never sympathetically explored. The casual tourist to Mexico who visits the Shrine, does not

comprehend ordinarily what he sees there; rejects what appears on the surface. On the other hand, to the many foreigners who have made the discovery, the Shrine has become the secret trysting place, the walled retreat, the profuse garden, removed from the trafficking of the universal tourist routes.

for the whole world

We have ample evidence in Mary's instruction to Juan Diego that the Temple of Tepeyac is for the whole world. In the first apparition, on December 9th, in the year 1531, she told him to notify the great Zumarraga, first Bishop of Mexico, to erect a temple there to bear witness to "*My love, my compassion, my succor and protection. For, I am a merciful Mother to thee and to all thy fellow people on this earth who love me and trust me and invoke my help.*" If all that her clemency claimed was to be realized, if she was to listen to their lamentations and solace all their sorrows and sufferings, then . . . "*here in the valley a temple should be built to me.*"

That the Bishop would ask for a sign, and that she was to give it to him in the form of her image on the coarse *tilma* of Juan Diego, was evidence that her appearance was to have extension and fulfillment in time.

Until a sanctuary could be constructed at Tepeyac, the solicitous Zumarraga enshrined the miraculous image in the great cathedral which dominated the plaza of the city. A magnificent church, still so today, it had risen on the site of the principal pagan temple which the zealous Cortes had destroyed.

By the time a repository had been prepared at Tepeyac, the fragrance of the *Aztec Rose* had permeated the land. The pomp, the ceremony, the state, the jubilation of the procession which accompanied her image to the humble place of her abode, proclaimed her popular acceptance. The first indication of her pleasure came in the form of a miracle for all to see. Even as she had restored the dying Juan Bernardino a short time earlier, so she now restored an Indian who had been pierced with an arrow in the enthusiasm of the festivities. And so did she begin her rule. Here truly, for the Indians, was one who did not demand life, but sustained life.

In those early days thousands upon thousands of Indians were baptized. The *padres* labored under the staggering burden of disseminating the fundamental Christian instruction to the multitudes. Numer-

ous tongues had to be learned. Because the Indian was still, essentially, pagan, some early ecclesiastical figures feared that the devotion at Tepeyac was strongly corrupted. For this reason they concentrated on preaching Christ and ignored the Mother of Christ for a time. In some instances they even evidenced prejudice to the flowering cult. However, those earnest men were responding to the need of the time, and their actions were appropriate to this need. Could they have foreseen, in their colonial effort, that Guadalupe was the leaven by which a vast nation was to be leavened, their recorded views would have been filled with praise for the devotion. It is easy for us to look back on what has transpired and trace the wisdom of God in the plan. But even we, with more to go on than they, have not seemingly projected that plan into our own futures.

pilgrims to the Shrine

For the pilgrim to understand Guadalupe, he must first grasp the fact that the gentle Virgin he gazes upon as he kneels before the present lavish altar of her enthronement, has looked out on every minute of four centuries of time. Here, in the same vicinity where he kneels, the Juan Diego who so loved her kept daily vigil, as he had requested in the *abatal* composed to her honor: *"Delicately was your image painted, and on the sacred canvas your soul was concealed. All is perfect and complete in its presence, and there, God willing, shall I dwell forever."*

As time altered the temple around Mary, untold millions came on their knees before her. Outside of her walls, the great lake slowly disappeared from the valley floor. A great metropolis had risen in its bed. The dust of passing armies drifted in her doors. The sound of cannonade made mystical wounds in her heart. Uninterruptedly, her people came to her. The plumed chiefs passed with the years, but always the Indian came, the Spaniard, and the new strains of blood, the new faces of the land. Legions of women and children had looked upon her with their soft, brown eyes; emperors, *presidentes*, revolutionaries, generals, and the women who shared their lives; princes of the Church, even Cortes himself, had knelt there. But always most in evidence, the *rebozo*, the *sandal*, the *sarape*. For the poor are her inheritance.

And so the pilgrim who refuses the propaganda of the trained, professional guide, who comes here his own way, and who remains to pray, will find that he is in the company of her true children, the people

of Mexico. For many days after, the memory of what he experiences will return to force its way into his consciousness. He will remember the beauty of the dark interior, the dark, earnest faces, the singular faith; the weathered feet, the humble dress, the affinity of the people for the earth; the tons of deposited flowers, the pitiful *centavo*, the love which lights the little candles. He knows he will never see such great clouds of incense such as arise during the Masses here. But above all, he will remember the pulse of people and the sound they made behind him as they moved forward in their homage on their knees—like gentle waves washing the eternal shore of the altar. He will remember that this has been so for the incomprehensible reality of four hundred and twenty-three years, and this will become the focal point of his increased devotion to the faithful Virgin!

the miraculous image

Looked at with prayerful attention and study, her image becomes meaningful in proportion to the love the pilgrim has for Mary and to the degree he has seen and understood Mexico, at least in the people about him. As he searches for detail he will probably discover what seems to be a perfect representation of a chalice and host appearing above the reverently folded hands. Later, he will be delighted to find out that the representation actually exists. His eyes will rest in the soft warmth of the colors. Here are reflected the true shades of Mexico—the eroded white of a garden wall in disrepair, the soft burst of bloom in the vast panorama of the land; the azure skies, the alkali-pinks, the copper hues and the dusk-of-the-eyes. There appears only a poignant hint of the dark red of the blood that has stained the warp of this land.

Searching the image more closely to see what the Mother of Christ has revealed of herself, the vivid description of Pope Benedict XV becomes a personal speculation: *"This is an image of such beauty as was never beheld here below and one whose aspect of amiability leads one to ponder on the beauties of Mary in heaven above."* Five of his predecessors too had honored her, but the words of Benedict XV ring with most meaning. In the words of the Psalmist he had exclaimed, *"This has been granted to no other nation!"*

While each individual will see in this image what his faith will dispose him to see, all will see in it the countenance of our Universal Mother. Yet faithfully does she represent the land over which she actively reigns. One can accurately surmise that in the little towns of

Mexico, the simple lives, the peasant lives, of Mary and Joseph have been re-lived again and again. Any *peon* could be Joseph. But this is no reason for the foreign pilgrim to remain or become estranged from the dark-eyed Mary. When one pauses to consider, the representations given to us to commemorate the apparitions of Fatima and Lourdes are equally foreign in their physical characteristics, and infinitely more so in their *art*. In the image of Tepeyac, *La Morenita* suggests that something of the physical essence of the *child-mother* of Christ, as she walked upon the earth, is depicted in the lovely child of this image.

Regardless, here is this image to behold, miraculous in the properties of its state of being, which has been attested by scientific analysis. The image—which was not and now is—not made by hands, but appearing miraculously on the woven, seamed *atyl* of the *tilma*, originating and coming into being as a singular movement of the Divine Love in Mary for her children. What can be compared to the value of this rare gift of God? By the very fact of its being it has fostered the birth, culture, and growth of Mexico. By the fact of its endowment, Tepeyac has become the visible link binding the continents of the Americas. Here is deposited the precious nard which can assuage the pain of the present and heal the wounds of the future.

no miracles needed

While miracles have occurred over the years to further endear the Shrine to the hearts of the people, they are not important to its purpose, except insofar as they may have been miracles of grace. Mary has not encumbered this Shrine with that particular type of solicitude. However, when the nation was imperilled by the Great Plague of 1736, she alleviated its devastation when her children formally appealed to her. Thereafter was a copy of her image prominent in every home. While other shrines of the world attest to her power by acclaiming the great numbers of physical cures which do take place, it is a tribute to the Mexican people that their faith does not require such manifestations. The Church carefully teaches that only unbelief requires miracles. And that is the unattractive quality of them.

Her greatest attestation of all to the people of Mexico, and the world, was her solitary defiance of the antichrist who walked abroad upon the land for so many years, destroying the very physical, cultural, intellectual and moral glory of New Spain.

By 1936 the life of the Church in Mexico was at its lowest ebb. All decency had gone out of Mexican life. The government itself, seeking to stabilize its existence and identity, began to comprehend the tremendous burden of reconstruction with which it was faced. Today many constructive programs are in effect although the government still officially rejects the sovereign rights of God over the nation. Yet Christ lives in the hearts of the people. Once again the churches are open. Young priests come up out of new seminaries. On the backs of mules they carry Christ across the land and live the vocation which had all the appearances of voluntary martyrdom when they chose it. The Virgin of Guadalupe has been faithful to her promise. With her virginal foot, she crushed the head of the *satan* of the *teocalli*.

During the years of the persecution the people met the many oppressions of the various governments with the usual expected opposition. In those years it would have been impossible for the people to find common means, motives and energy to organize their resistance. It would have been a miracle had they done so. However, in those same years, had the Shrine of Guadalupe been physically molested, Mexico would have burst into flame overnight. For *La Morenita* was for them their identity! Here, at Tepeyac, the Spaniard, the Mestizo, the Indian, the Creole, Mexicans all and Christians, can lay special claim upon the God of Abraham, the Father of Christ, the Son of Holy Mary of Guadalupe! Here is the fulfillment of their past, the promise of their future, their endurance, their hope in all things. Here is both the cause and the heritage of their nation. It is theirs. But not entirely; for it is also possessed in a unique way by all the people of this hemisphere.

Guadalupe is a source of grace for the Americas. Here is a lesson to be learned and an experience, intellectual and spiritual, to be shared. The great meaning for our time is apparent in this discovery: that in a most manifest way, the Christ of the Beatitudes has been among us. Though we have not remembered, He long ago foretold that He would appear among us; among the poor, the meek, and they that mourn; among those who have hungered and thirsted after justice; among the merciful and clean of heart, the children of peace, the persecuted. By His very presence among these does He pronounce again the terrible woe upon the rich, upon them that are filled, and them that even now, laugh and make merry. And in His stark appearance is the gentle Virgin known to us. She is the Mother of these children of the Beatitudes. It was she who gave them Christ.



Jerem O'Sullivan-Barra

the password

A piece of fiction.

*Yet this story is an authentic reflection
of conditions that prevail among Progressive Catholics
in Poland.*

It was the second day that the very jaundiced young man had been following their party. After the visit to the Tashkent Hospital the day before, he had come close to the group as they were leaving the Eye Clinic. Florian noted that the young man's eyes glinted strongly in his emaciated face—the green-yellow face of one who might have had recurring malaria and repeated dosages of quinine.

Wearing his dirtied white hospital coat over obviously tattered trousers, the fellow had walked all the way from the hospital to the special dining room set up for the visiting group near the Tashkent Party Headquarters. Florian had caught sight of him standing quietly near the entrance when their group of six entered.

Today, the same thing happened. The young man, still in the same hospital coat, loitered behind their party as they moved from the Party Youth Headquarters to the dining room. Florian was supposed to be listening to Beata who was telling in her insistent, exciting voice about the fine programs of recreation and civic training that the Kom-somol had worked out for the young girls of Tashkent, and for the Republic of Uzbekistan. She was emphasizing something about the great force that was freeing the women of these Euro-Asiatic villages

from slavery, but Florian was glancing over his shoulder to see if the young man was still there. He was, and he seemed to have a sort of talent for loitering inconspicuously. His head was completely clean shaven, a not uncommon habit in this area. Perhaps it was true, after all, that his eyes were searching out the eyes of Florian in an attempt to hold his gaze.

The eyes looked familiar, but Florian could not place the person of whom they reminded him. He tried to puzzle this out, rather idly, as he looked at the jaundiced stranger. Suddenly the emphatic voice of Beata stopped, and he found that she too was looking at the loiterer. She frowned a little and then shot a quick glance at Florian. Then they entered the dining room to be greeted by Gerainoff, a sub-secretary of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR who made all arrangements for the group, including interviews, visits, meals, transportation. The meals, mused Florian, as he sat down to barley and some stringy meat that he surmised was goat, were Gerainoff's poorest achievement.

The tour of collective farms in backward Uzbekistan had been most encouraging, as had been the visits to hospitals, schools and youth centers. He had found the pungent smell of the dung-covered walls of village houses hard to take, and the filth of the few hospitals and dispensaries somewhat striking. But they were reminded that a few years ago, things had been indescribably worse. The anti-trachoma campaign was the most advertised event in the region. Who else, Florian asked himself, but a government of the people would embark on such a campaign in a remote section like Tashkent.

As he ate, he again thought of the boy with the intense grey eyes. "His eyes are like my eyes," he said to himself in a sudden moment of cognition. "The one he reminds me of is myself. Except that he is so emaciated, he might be my twin. I wonder if he could be a Pole."

At that moment the slight, off-white coat was passing the window. Florian thought to himself: he may be just taking a walk during his lunch time—but it is odd, this staring and loitering two days in succession. Florian wondered what Beata and his three Czech colleagues would think if he tried to contact this odd-looking character who looked at him with his own eyes. Their meetings were organized on a severe time schedule during this month-long tour to study economic development in a classically backward region.

They were all press workers, all concentrating on youth problems, especially that of tearing young people away from unprogressive notions and superstitions that blocked real achievement in the here and

now. Florian and Beata would write for the Progressive Catholic newspaper of Warsaw the story of the astounding economic and cultural developments among some of the most superstitious, apathetic and disease-ridden villages of the world. He had enough material for dozens of articles, as had the Czech delegation for their Progressive Catholic organ. Frantisek and Theo were good company, making endless jokes about how comparable Uzbekistan was to Slovakia in speed of socialist economic progress and in faithfulness to outworn traditions. Mrs. Sramek, like Beata, was covering the woman's side of the picture.

Before the meal had ended, Florian answered the impulse to find out if the boy with his own eyes had any special reason for hanging around the group—or was just another Russian boy whose look of longing came from a desire for a cigarette. Florian excused himself as soon as Gerainoff had finished the sentence regarding the administrative penalties that had been invoked against certain Uzbek and Kazakh Muslims for promoting disaffection among the villagers.

Florian made his way across a dirt court yard in the direction of the latrine, walking leisurely and catching the eye of the boy with the jaundiced face. The boy looked guardedly at Florian, and then formed carefully and quietly the words: "Niech bedzie pochwalony Jesus Chrystus." It was hardly more than a whisper, "May Jesus Christ be praised."

Without thinking, and in the same whispered tone, Florian answered the old Polish greeting with the traditional, "Na wieki wiekow Amen."—"For ever and ever, Amen."

A violent sob shook the thin body. "Thanks be to God and his Holy Mother. I knew you were a Pole. Come back to the hospital tonight," he said in a rush. "I must tell you about us."

"Tonight? Yes. I'll come," Florian said and fumbled in his pocket to give the boy a cigarette, but he had already walked away and was almost hidden by the fruit trees that lined the walk.

Beata fixed a questioning eye on him as he rejoined the group. They had finished the meal and were readying for the afternoon's excursion to the Museum of People's Arts, housed in a former Mosque. Beata walked with him and asked quietly, "That boy you talked to—he looks like you. Why is he hanging around?"

Always Florian was open with Beata. She was strong and decisive, and he loved her for it. But now he said, "I don't know—but I couldn't help noticing him."

"He said something to you," insisted Beata.

"Yes, perhaps he said something—but I didn't catch anything. I gave him some cigarettes. That's probably why he hung around."

"You gave him no cigarettes. I was watching you," she said sharply.

Florian realized why Beata was so valuable to the new government in Warsaw, and so trusted by several ministries. She did not miss details, as he often did.

But still Florian could not share the little exchange with Beata. "I thought I had," he said lamely. "I was fumbling for them, and I suppose he gave up and walked away. These days, I am so tired by our early morning starts that I hardly know what I am doing."

Beata said nothing, but after a while, she linked her arm into his, stroking his forearm. She often did this, especially in public places when she knew he could not kiss her, or after a quarrel, when she wanted to make up to him. Often, after she had accused him of being too weak, of not facing up fully to the new realities of the times, she would suddenly change, and softly put her arm through his, stroking his forearm as if to remind him that he was a man. It was, in a way, giving him back his manhood after she had taken it away by means of her tongue.

He remembered once again, that the Oswiecim Camp number was on the arm with which she was caressing him—the tattooed number that could not be erased. His love and tenderness for her flowed through him.

She had only been nineteen when she was liberated—wide-eyed, not as the young girls had been in the novels he had read in school before the war—but wide-eyed with the terror of a young girl who had been spared nothing. That had been in 1945, seven years ago. Now her blue eyes were direct and fearless. Sometimes they were eager and warm when they talked of marriage and their further work together.

But the marriage she postponed, even though as editor of the weekly organ of the Progressive Catholics of Warsaw, he had been building a solid reputation that would guarantee him a good apartment when he married. Lately, her moments of tenderness had been fewer, and she chided him more frequently. She wanted him to become stronger, and not give way to moments of softness and melancholy.

When she thought of the past she became cold and hard with hatred. She remembered her terrible helplessness at Oswiecim, and she took joy in the power that was hers in helping make the future. "Poland has always been on the losing side because we Poles use our

hearts, not our heads," she would say, shaking her boy-like head of short, brown curls. "For once, let us choose the side of the future. We need a new Polish spirit—and we need a new religious spirit too. Much of our past suffering has come from slavishly following Rome." She would say at school meetings, "Poland's past has been filled with romantics and martyrs. If we are to have any future, we must produce not martyrs but realists."

When Florian thought of the past, he could not always hold back the tears. His cheeks would be wet as he remembered the day that his father, grandfather, and two older brothers had been shot when the German troops entered their town. They had taken refuge in a monastery along with other men in uniform, and were all shot together in the monastery cemetery.

It was he, the youngest son, who had to bring his mother the news. She did not say anything, but the next day, she tried to feed him as though he was a baby. The same afternoon, she ran out into the street wearing a lace curtain over her head, and calling for her husband to meet her at St. Jadwiga's Church. Florian could not pull her back, and finally, a German lieutenant saw the disheveled woman. He shouted something, and three soldiers overpowered her, and bound her by knotting the curtain around her body.

It was this way, with her arms bound at her sides, that she sat in the town jail for several days. Florian was permitted to visit her, and he tried to persuade her to eat the food he brought from their home. But she refused everything mutely, and even spit back the liquid that he poured into her mouth. When she died, she was buried in a common grave. Florian took the old pastor to say a few prayers near the mound where her body lay. The old priest took the boy to live with him in the rectory. Florian could only cry until he was exhausted, and then doze, and wake up to cry again. He knew that, as a boy of fifteen, he should have been more of a man, but he could not help himself, and the old priest could not console him.

It was the recurrence of tears that angered Beata. She was fond of saying, "I do not know how to cry. The last tear came out of me before I was nineteen." He admired and clung to her for her bright sureness. She always had an answer for the problems that troubled him.

As they walked through the streets of Tashkent, the air was filled with the scent of many fruit-trees in bloom. What would otherwise have been a dingy city was transformed by the many trees that grew

and blossomed everywhere. Florian took Beata's palm in his and locked his fingers around hers. Even as he did so, he felt somehow traitorous to her. He could not tell her about the young Pole because he felt she would not approve of any clandestine meeting. She would insist on informing Gerainoff and he felt he could not do that. He had to go and find out "about us," though he had no idea who the "us" could be.

He released Beata's hand—Mrs. Sramek disapproved of any show of affection on this official tour—and began to puzzle out how he could break away from the party during the evening. The Mosque Museum was also to serve as a theatre that evening, when a group of young people brought in from surrounding villages were to present a series of gymnastic drills followed by folk dances.

There was only one way—to pretend that he was suffering from an illness brought on by local foods. He was the only one who had suffered no discomfort.

The girl gymnasts were barely warming up to their drills under the glare of a row of bare electric light bulbs strung across the Mosque interior, and the two young Czechs had scarcely made more than a joke apiece, when Florian rose and approached Gerainoff. "Dysentery," he said and started to walk away.

"You've been fortunate so far. I hope you'll be all right for tomorrow's excursion, Comrade Jankowski." Gerainoff called after him.

Florian could not meet Beata's eyes as he left the Mosque. Quickly he made his way along the dusty street that led to the hospital. In the Eye Clinic, he found the young Pole busily washing the walls. As Florian came in, he continued to work.

"Panie," he said hurriedly, "I offered to wash the walls of the clinic so that I could meet you here. You are the first Pole I have had the chance to talk to in ten years. After the great deportations by the Red Army, most of us went through here to Teheran. But some of us are left—a lot in the cemetery. And many children. I am nineteen. The others are still in schools. I remember I am a Pole, they are forgetting. I wanted you to know about us."

"Tell me first," asked Florian, "who are you, and from what part of Poland are you?"

"I am from Lodz, and we were all deported to Uzbekistan by the Red Army. I am Jan Kaczmarek, and my father was a teacher in the Gymnasium. Here is where the Poles from Siberia came together ten years ago.

But, Panie, there are many orphans in the villages. You are im-

important because you eat at Central Headquarters. Take the children back to Poland."

"Don't say 'Panie' to me," said Florian. "We are all Comrades now—all equal."

"All right, Mr. Comrade, but take them back to Poland. I have gone out to visit them, and they can't remember their own tongue. I must speak to them in Russian.

"I remember much because I was nearly ten years old, and because I read many books of my father's. But some of these were only five and could not read. They remember only small things—not even their last name—just their nicknames like Andzik or Witek.

"Many still remember that they helped to put the earth over their mother or father at the burial—and that they said prayers. But now, they only know how to make the sign of the cross, Mr. Comrade."

"And will making the sign of the cross help them?" asked Florian.

The boy stopped washing the wall. He seemed stunned. "Are you a Pole indeed—or one who can only talk the Polish tongue?" His voice was full of fright.

"I am indeed a Pole, the last of my family," said Florian. "If your story is true, where are these lost children? And, by the way, if this whole thing is not your imagination, why are you still here?"

"I got typhoid fever. First my mother and sister died of it in the street. I woke up in this hospital after everyone had left for Teheran. My father had died on the deportation train. I too am the only living one in my family.

"I found many little Polish children and stayed with them. They are in the villages around here. But the village of Atan has the most because they took the youngest and put them in the Orphans' Agonomic Training Institute.

"Go there, Mr.—I mean, Comrade, and help them go to their country." The boy was becoming more agitated, and was spilling the water on wall and floor.

"I'll do what I can. I promise you that," said Florian. He felt a sudden need to reassure this worn, sick-looking boy. "Atan is a place we must visit, and I will do everything to find the Polish youngsters. Poland needs them—and it needs you, too, Jan Kaczmarek for you are youthful and clever. But tell me, if they don't speak Polish, how will I be able to recognize. . . ."

He stopped as he heard voices from the corridor that connected the clinic with the hospital. Jan Kaczmarek opened the door and

pushed him out into the dark courtyard. The boy was working furiously on the wall as a doctor and nurse entered the clinic. Florian slipped away and reached the official lodging before Gerainoff and his charges returned.

Florian studied the itinerary for the remaining two weeks of the tour. Atan was scheduled for a day's tour in ten days' time.

As the Zis car drove into Atan, Florian lost the stunned feeling that had come over him when Gerainoff's figures on cotton and grain yields, and on the miles of irrigation canals had reached dizzying heights. He became so alert that every building in the town leapt to his gaze as if possessed of living power. The people who stood in the street to stare at their special touring car seemed to have more definite characteristics than the anonymous groups of varied nationalities in other towns who left whatever they were doing to gaze at the group of Poles and Czechs.

Florian realized that the chance of checking the story of the mysterious Jan Kaczmarek was reviving him. He had never brought himself to mention the incident to Beata. He knew she would think it a kind of treason to the cause they were both serving—the rapprochement between the Marxist wave of the future and the present of the Polish nation. Perhaps it was a kind of treason, but Kolski, the head of the Progressive Catholic Movement, had assured him that the Movement was based above all on realism and truth. He would get to the truth of the matter, and put it up to Kolski, if any action was required.

Gerainoff was listing the places of interest in Atan. "At the other end of town, Comrades," he said finally, "is the Institute of Fruit Culture, and next to it, the Orphans' Agronomic Training Institute. We will be taken through all the places I have mentioned to you tomorrow."

At five-thirty in the morning, the six of them were watching the several hundred children of the Training Institute eating a breakfast of an indeterminate porridge that looked like barley, along with an apple apiece. Florian was studying the various groups of children so intently that he did not hear what the Director of the Institute was saying. His eyes paused as they rested on the boys in their early teens. There were more and more Polish faces, he felt sure, standing out strangely among the predominantly Uzbek and Tatar types. Some of the Slavic faces looked wizened for teen-agers. There were many cases of skin diseases and some had the typical eyes of trachoma sufferers. One boy of about fifteen had only one eye. Florian began to count those who looked to him Polish, and had reached the number of sixteen, when Beata took

his arm to lead him out. She seemed annoyed with him.

"Florian, it's too early in the morning to see your Father's ghost. What are you staring at?"

He looked at her and something came to his lips that he did not utter, "I have seen our children's ghosts."

As they left the orphanage to visit the model fruit groves, he darted away from the others, saying that he wanted to say a special word of goodbye to the Director.

"Many thanks for your kindness in showing us your fine Institute, Comrade Director," said Florian. "I was wondering what plans were being made for the Polish children who are here."

"Comrade, there are no Polish children here. The parents of these children are not to be talked about. Did you not hear me explain this morning that these children came from unfortunate homes—very unfortunate."

"Unfortunate?" queried Florian.

"But I have already explained it to your group, and Gerainoff added some points to make it clearer," said the Director somewhat impatiently.

"Unfortunate, how?" pursued Florian.

"From a political point of view, of course. Their parents were the worst kind of deviationists—enemies of everything we are trying to accomplish for Uzbekistan. These children had to be removed from their parents, or rather, in most cases, their parents had to be removed from them."

"Removed from them—where?"

"Oh, there was an insurrection engineered by Moslem fanatics. Many paid the supreme administrative penalty, and their children are here."

"But I am not concerned with the Uzbek children. I had heard that there were Polish children here, and I think this may be so."

"Where did you get that report, Comrade?" the Director asked quickly.

"It was mentioned to me in Warsaw—or perhaps Cracow." Florian answered.

"There are none," said the Director curtly and walked to his private dwelling which stood on the Institute grounds.

Florian surveyed his group. They were discussing something near the gate of the orphanage and were not looking his way. He turned into the Institute where the children were already in their classrooms.

A Tatar worker was carrying a basket of laundry along the dank hallway.

"Where are the classrooms of the older children—fourteen or fifteen years old?" asked Florian in careful Russian.

The man understood. "They are on the second floor—at the back near the orchard," he replied in accented Russian. "If the important man from Moscow wishes, I will leave this unimportant basket and lead him there."

"Just tell me the room," urged Florian.

"I will lead the delegate from Moscow," said the Tatar who seemed to be seething about something—or everything—as he laid his laundry down.

As they walked, Florian remarked, "I am not from Moscow. I am a Pole, from Poland."

"You are not one of 'them' from Moscow," said the man, and he ostentatiously spit on the stairs. "You are a Pole—the first to come here in ten years. We Tatars are a sad people like you. Many Poles died here, and near the border is a whole field full of their bodies. Above each body stands two pieces of sticks. I go there to keep the sticks in the right arrangement. A boy from Tashkent, a Pole like yourself, pays me to go to this field whenever he visits Atan. The Poles respect God like our people—not like 'them'," and he spat again more vehemently.

"Not like who?" asked Florian.

"The delegates they send here from Moscow."

"You must learn to appreciate the men from Moscow," said Florian, "they mean well by your people and mine."

"Mean well," seethed the Tatar, "Mean well! We spit after we have to name them. Here is the classroom of the older boys."

Florian walked in and asked the teacher what subject he was teaching. "It is mathematics now. We study from books in the morning, and in the afternoon the boys work in the fruit groves and earn their keep with honorable labor."

"I wonder if some of your pupils came originally from Poland," asked Florian.

The teacher looked stony-faced. "These boys are Russian but their parents—unfortunate parents in so many cases—may have come from many regions—including great Russia. If the Director has not authorized your visit, I must ask you to leave."

Florian felt as though a wall had been erected before him—a wall

behind which these Polish children were being hidden in broad daylight. Suddenly he remembered Jan's whispered greeting in Tashkent, and the sob that came after Florian's automatic answer. He raised his voice, and looking at the Slavic faces, said slowly:

"Niech bedzie pochwalony Jesus Chrystus—May Jesus Christ be praised."

A few voices were immediately raised in a kind of startled cry—"Na wieki wiekow Amen." After a few seconds, it came again, now with a dozen voices, "For ever and ever, Amen." Then a few stragglers found their voices to echo the four words in a wondering way. By that time, three of the older boys were kissing Florian's hands, and one was saying in a kind of Polish, "Who are you. Are you a priest? Did they send you from our country to bring us back?"

The teacher pushed the boys aside and stepped in front of Florian.

"Please finish your problems. This intrusion is unauthorized." Then he turned to Florian, "I must ask you to leave at once, or there will be difficulty for you, for me—and for them. I will say nothing, Comrade."

Florian looked briefly at the faces of the boys who had approached him. There was a sort of wildness in their look—a trapped look as though they wanted to run to him but were stopped by bars that they could see quite clearly. They took their seats as he left, and he tried to articulate words of goodbye. But he knew he was scarcely audible, so he made a sign to them. Unaccountably, he found himself making the sign of the cross. He saw them making the sign of the cross with the same wild look of wonderment in their eyes as he left the classroom.

The teacher followed him, "What will you do now, Comrade from Poland?" he asked.

"I will say nothing here. Goodbye," said Florian, and walked away. Frantisek was standing at the entrance to the Institute waiting for him. "Gerainoff is waiting for your arrival before he can start quoting his statistics. Hurry up. The others are in the orchard ready to bite into the luscious fruit of knowledge."

Frantisek smiled, "I could imagine why you would be detained in the fruit sorting pavilion. That school had no such attractions."

"What attractions?" asked Florian to keep up the conversation.

"You will see as we go by," laughed Frantisek. "The only girls in Uzbekistan that I would miss a Gerainoff lecture for. Look at that hair."

Florian saw the fair haired girls who were busy sorting fruit. There was no need to test them with a greeting as he had done with the boys whose heads had been shaved. They were clearly the remnants of the Poles who had survived their wartime stay in these parts. They looked shyly and wonderingly at the two young men. He could not approach them, and he and Frantisek joined the waiting group.

Back in Warsaw, he and Beata were immediately received by Kolski. As leader of the Progressive Catholic Group, he had a seat in the Parliament, and came regularly to oversee what went into the group's newspaper. Beata was excited over the series of six articles she would do on the means by which girls and women participated in the economic, social and cultural development of collectivized Uzbekistan. She cited succinctly and vividly fact after fact, and visit after visit. Kolski smiled happily. "I knew you two were the right ones to send. You are the most alive pair I have around here. And will you do the same thing for the male youth—six similar articles?" he asked Florian.

"Yes, indeed," replied Florian, glad that he had not been questioned too closely. When the interview was finished, Florian asked if he could have a few minutes alone with Kolski. Beata seemed angry, but she left, her quick eager step breaking the silence that fell between the two men.

Finally Kolski asked, "Well, Florian, do you want some special directive on these articles? You know I am developing the new thesis which will underlie all the future work of the Progressive Catholics. Perhaps now is the time to stress it for our young people. You have seen how the superstitions that crowd out true religion and retard progress have been swept away in Uzbekistan. That is why we wanted you and Beata to accompany our Czech counterparts in this most extensive tour.

"Here in Poland, our task is not dissimilar. We must make religion serve life, not death—serve the living, not past traditions.

"I am developing the theme that the human leaders of the Catholic religion, for their own purposes, have been stressing the role of God the Redeemer down through the ages. This keeps us on the level of expiation, of emphasis on sin, on fear, on the fetters that bind men to conformity and blind obedience to their religious leaders. But true religion should bring before men's minds the role of God the Creator, Who made this world as a great workshop where men, freed from fears and blind obedience and preoccupation with sin and punishment, can unite to create for themselves a better life than anything known on this

earth. This great mission of man as willed by the Creator has been obscured up to now. Point up such concepts in writing of the transformation of the Uzbek S.S.R..

"But," Florian interjected, "the transformation down there is so limited that it might not be so good a case in point—I mean to illustrate so great a theme."

Kolski sat back. "What has happened to you on this trip? Are you telling me what the directives are, or am I giving them to you? These do not come solely from me, as you know. These ideas will be the great liberating force for millions of fettered people in the next decade."

Kolski was beginning to get heated again, as he often did at rallies of the Progressive Catholics. He suddenly leaned behind his desk, and drank from a small flask which was known to contain a special combination of liquids called "Kolski's Inspiration." He was lost without the flask, but with it, he was a fervent master of argument. He was ready to argue now, but Florian said determinedly: "The reason I wanted to speak to you alone, is that in Uzbekistan I found some of our own people. They are the last remnants in that region of the many Poles who survived the trek into Siberia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. I saw a group of orphans in an Institute who are undoubtedly Poles, but the Director denies this. You are our leader and spokesman. You have told us that we stand for realism and truth. I ask you to request the return of these children."

Kolski shook his head, and then he shivered. "Comrade Florian what makes you think these young people are Polish. What kind of a story have you been listening to about a trek of Poles into Siberia and Asiatic Russia? It is better—and wiser—not to talk of such matters."

Florian said, "I know that they are Polish, because I stood in a classroom in Atan, in a remote part of Uzbekistan, and I said to a group of boys, 'May Jesus Christ be praised,' and the answer came from many throats, 'For ever and ever, Amen.' They thought I was a priest come to rescue them. I could do nothing. I ask you to rescue them."

Kolski was out of his chair. "If that is what you were doing in Uzbekistan, we will all lose our heads—I mean, get into real trouble. Comrade Florian, it is true that some Poles found themselves in Russia during the past war—a war which will never be repeated if we Poles continue as Fighters for Peace by the side of the Soviet Union. They were evacuated there for their safety by the compassion of the Red

Army Command, to save them from the Nazi fury. If some have remained behind to help the new socialist initiatives of the Soviet Union, who are we to make them change their minds? Do you also want to bring back the hundreds of thousands of Poles who chose to sell themselves into slavery as Displaced Persons to the American War Machine? No, Comrade Florian, I will not discuss this matter further. Put these deviationist thoughts out of your head, and get the articles written.

"Incidentally, tonight, we have a large meeting of young men under our Progressive Catholic leadership. I intend to develop my new theme, and we want you to talk for about a half an hour on the significance of your tour. In a way it will be a welcome home for you."

Florian got up. He was trembling uncontrollably. "I saw them. They were only boys. Many buried their own parents as little children. I saw them make the sign of the cross. It is all they know. You are our leader. You will speak for them."

Kolski was angry. "I don't hear Beata come back with such an unlikely story. She is ready to start on her articles. You get busy, Florian, and not a word about this matter from now on. Someone from the Security Ministry is waiting to see me." At that moment, the door of the office opened, and two squat men walked in. Florian knew them as secret police agents.

Florian returned to his own office, and began to receive the many persons who wanted to make reports to him. His answers to them were barely coherent, and he finally said that he had to be left alone to read the issues of the paper that had been put out in his absence. The "Priest-Partisans for Peace" had made a new declaration against war-mongering activities of the capitalist, imperialist camp under the leadership of the United States. A group of Polish army chaplains had urged all Catholics to sign the Stockholm Appeal for Peace condemning as the aggressor the first nation to use the atomic bomb. The leader of the Progressive Catholics urged the Catholics of Poland to collaborate with the forces for peace headed by the Soviet Union whose policies were based on realism and truth. . . .

He got up distractedly and stared down into the street. Beata tapped into the room. She wanted him to hear the first page of her first article. It opened with a description of the Mosque Museum in Tashkent, and the drama of women appearing as gymnasts and performers in that setting. She did not notice his distraction.

"They are waiting for us for dinner," she said excitedly. "Then we must all go to the meeting of the Progressive Catholic Youth

League. I am to sit on the platform, and you are to talk on your experiences. It will be easy for you to talk after all we have seen, Florian."

During the dinner, Florian said little, but sat seemingly listening to the exploits of the group in Warsaw while he and Beata were in the Soviet Union. They attributed his silence to the fact that he was mentally preparing his speech. "There was a big scandal while you two were away," said Bronek, a twenty-year old activist.

"In St. Joseph's Church a priest almost pointed at us and said that we were trying to use religion, to use God for our own political purposes. He talked about our paper, and almost named names. He shouted that we were obscuring for the young the real purpose of religion—individual salvation. Then he said that maybe Providence would show its own power, and perhaps God would use the Progressive Catholics for His purposes. Some of us were there and of course reported him—a real fanatic trouble-maker. Maybe his God is using him now—but he's not using him at St. Joseph's any more."

Florian took out a piece of notepaper and began to write a few sentences. He continued to write when they were seated on the stage during Kolski's long speech on God the Redeemer and God the Creator. Finally, Florian was introduced as the outstanding young writer, editor and Progressive Catholic leader who had just returned from a tour of one of the most backward areas of the entire Soviet Union, an area transformed by socialist planning.

"I am a Pole" he began, "just returned from a remote part of the Soviet Union. It is a place that few of our nation ever visited, but ten years ago nearly a quarter of a million of our people found themselves in Uzbekistan. I am told they were evacuated there for their own safety, that they were part of a million and a half evacuated there for reasons of safety when no soldier was in their homes and villages but the Red Army soldier.

"I went into a classroom in a far-off town in this remote region of the USSR, and I saw children before me who looked at me, as you do, with Polish eyes, but who were not allowed to speak to me. In the few seconds that I had, I greeted them with the words of our fathers, 'May Jesus Christ be praised.' And after a second, voices sent back to me the reply of our fathers, and of our nation, 'For ever and ever, Amen.' These children, deprived of all, want to come back to Poland.

"In Poland, we are told we shall now stress God the Creator, so that we will join to create a better earth, and yes, a better heaven, by

our own unaided efforts. It is as though we do not need redemption because redemption means humility, consciousness of sin and guilt. I shall speak for myself. I need redemption at this hour. I had put out of my mind and heart the need for personal salvation. Do not let any person—or any movement—obscure for you the one thing necessary, the salvation of your soul.

"Perhaps I can also speak a few words for my nation. We have all known occupation, and we are trying to hide this knowledge in many ways. If Christ came to us now, we would expect that He would free us at once from occupation by others.

"He did not do that when He came to His own people, the Jewish nation, the apple of His eye, occupied by the Romans.

"He found His people occupied when He came on earth, and He left them occupied. His act of redeeming was not for time. And so it might be if Christ came among us now. He might find us and leave us occupied by others—but in this occupation, we may find our true spiritual redemption—through humiliation, and expiation.

"But He is amongst us, and His Sacred Body awaits many of us in vain, because we write words about Him but keep Him far from us."

Florian felt a slight commotion behind him and saw two squat men join the group sitting on the platform.

He raised his voice, "May Jesus Christ—Our Redeemer—be praised."

A murmured response went like a wind through the theatre as he turned away. The two heavy-set men motioned him into the wings, and he followed. Beata left the stage just as Kolski went to the rostrum once more in a state of extreme agitation.

Florian walked docilely between the two men and followed their lead out the side door onto the street. It was a night drenched in moonlight, and Beata's eyes shone with a fire he had never seen before. He darted away from the men to ask her to pray for him, to leave Kolski and his teachings.

All he saw was cold, pitiless fury in her eyes—before the blow killed the moonlight with complete blackness. The man who hit him dragged him to the car and began to push him into the back seat. The other man was thrusting the inert legs in the door as Beata turned on her heel and returned to the meeting. She was in time to hear the greater part of the able refutation of heresy by a Kolski more possessed by his ideas than she had ever seen before.

book reviews

TRANSFORMATION: THE STORY OF MODERN PUERTO RICO

by Earl Parker Hanson, Simon and Schuster, \$5.00

Here is a story of how a small, overcrowded and undeveloped island has improved its economic and political lot within two decades. Written by a Professor of Geography at the University of Delaware, the account is an interesting narrative and a partisan defense of the program and policies of Munoz Marin, the first elected Governor of Puerto Rico (1949) and the Nationalists who prepared the way before him.

The author has been associated with social planning on this West Indian isle since the earliest days of the New Deal and it is obvious that he has had access to government files and even to the thoughts (even hindsight) of Munoz himself.

Puerto Rico is far from being a prosperous country, although great strides have been made since 1933, and particularly since the end of World War II. Much remains to be done, as recent out-migration indicates. However, many people both on and off the island deserve a lot of credit for devoting themselves so selflessly to the cause of Puerto Rican improvement.

While Hanson lays great emphasis on the social experiment, it is the political skill of the Puerto Ricans that intrigues this reviewer. The new factories, the new schools, the lowered death rate are noteworthy achievements, the results of much more American skill and beneficence than Hanson credits. But like the Irish, Puerto Ricans have a knack of organizing political machines and manipulating influence until they get much of what they want. In the short while they have been in New York they have demonstrated that political skill.

Transformation is not a critique but an explanation. It does not narrate history and evaluate the component parts. Rather does it portray the thinking of the political party and the social leaders who now dominate the government of the island.

In many parts of the book Earl Parker Hanson demonstrates a sophisticated animosity for the Church.

"A program so effective and vitally important cannot, of course, be carried forward without opposition. The wonder in Puerto Rico is not that opposition exists but that it is weak. The Catholic Church, for instance, which once played a powerful role in Puerto Rican affairs, is not entirely happy over today's improvements. At least one of its high officials, Bishop McManus of Ponce, bewails the separation of Church and State under the Commonwealth's Constitution and repeatedly

charges the entire program with being immoral—(p. 5)."

"His (Munoz Marin's) political enemies, and especially Bishop McManus of Ponce, who talked against him during the 1952 gubernatorial campaign, have accused him repeatedly of being an arrant materialist, laboring for things of the stomach as against the soul—a charge which caused Padin (former Commissioner of Education) to write me that 'It is easy to say that man does not live by bread alone when one's belly is full of bread'—(p. 231)."

"Not everybody in Puerto Rico, however, is unqualifiedly happy over present vital trends in education. Cultural changes don't take place that easily. The most powerful voice of dissent in Puerto Rico is Bishop McManus of Ponce, who has repeatedly claimed that all of Munoz' Operation Bootstrap is materialistic and therefore virtually immoral—(p. 330-331)."

The Bishop himself has expressed the following opinion on current trends in Puerto Rican education:

"The present system is said to be democratic. It is just the contrary. It is antidemocratic and in addition antireligious. It is the special system of a minority group who talk a great deal about democracy, as well as liberty, equality, and brotherhood, and thus conceal, even from themselves, their hatred of God and Religion, and who try to impose on the majority a system that denies the right of the majority—a wrong permissible to them when God is excluded from human life (Ibid)."

There is little hope that there can be in the near future a meeting of minds between men like Bishop McManus and the left-wing secularistic liberals of the *New Republic* school which governs Puerto Rico, and is typified by the author Hanson himself. Whatever failures churchmen in bygone days can properly be accused of, the implication that Bishop McManus is the enemy of social betterment of the Puerto Rican people is too silly to need refutation. The very fact that some definite accomplishments toward this betterment have already been realized is due in great part to the social reawakening all over the world that followed the Great Depression and the prosperity that followed the Great War. However, secularistic sociologists and Puerto Rican Nationals trained by them have for twenty years looked upon this island as a test tube. Forgetting, indeed regretting, that what has made the Puerto Rican people lovable has been their Catholic culture, these experimenters have set out to uproot that culture. One can have lowered death rates and better housing without anti-religion, pagan education, abortion, contraception, and sterilization. Hanson does not write up honestly the real legitimate controversy over the methods used by social workers and doctors under Federal auspices to spread these evils. No

mention is made of complaints made against *almost* involuntary sterilization of Puerto Rican women, in the name of democracy, of course. No doubt is raised by Hanson over whether the social problem is really solved by eliminating people.

Right now the secularists are having their day. Hanson can write more than 400 pages without speaking of the Catholic culture which has profited the Puerto Rican people so greatly. But the roots of centuries lie deeper than the modern pagans prefer to remember. If they ignore religion and the Church, as Hanson does, it is only because they fear the Church. The issue should be joined now and Bishop McManus is right in publicly making them uncomfortable. *George A. Kelly*

ABBE PIERRE AND THE RAGPICKERS OF EMMAUS

by Boris Simon, P. J. Kenedy, \$3.75

This is the story of Abbe Pierre, who says "... universal joy is only attained through the sacrifice of oneself and not through that of the next man." This is the story of what this man, a priest, is doing today to fight social injustice with the help of the actual victims of the injustice. Whole emergency cities are being built in the Paris area to house those suffering thousands who literally have no homes.

The houses for families are being built by Abbe Pierre and the Companions of Emmaus. The majority of the companions (now about 700) is made up of the homeless themselves, criminals, derelicts, tramps, etc. When these men come to Emmaus for shelter they are put to work in the community, or on the homes, or are sent out rag-picking (the main source of income). Abbe Pierre says of them, "Restore to man his dignity. Herein lies the great secret. Without this not one of the ragpickers could do what he does, could live in primitive conditions in garbage dumps. . . . Respect his religious liberty. Don't make him sing psalms in exchange for a bowl of soup. This would only degrade him." Men who had been living in despair began "to shine in use." The poor were helping each other and the results were tremendous.

The book is somewhat fictionalized to avoid recognition of characters and at times it is a bit over-dramatic and sentimental, but not enough to spoil the reading enjoyment or to detract from the portrayal of Abbe Pierre himself, of his ideas (particularly of Christian responsibility applied to the world), and of the great work being done by his group. Abbe Pierre is a heroic figure whose work, ideas, and principles are being recognized now by the rest of the world.

Peggy Short

THE AGE OF BELIEF

by Anne Fremantle, Houghton Mifflin Co. \$2.75—Co-published in paper cover by New American Library, \$.50

The Houghton Mifflin Company is producing a series of volumes—six in all—on "The Great Ages of Western Philosophy." In this series they hope to present to "the inquiring layman and the student" the essence of fifteen centuries of Western thought. It's a good idea. Mrs. Fremantle's book on the philosophy of the Dark Ages, often called the Age of Belief, is the first in the series.

As always, Mrs. Fremantle does a professional job of it. I think she will have better success with "the student" than with the "inquiring layman"—but that's as much the fault of St. Thomas and Duns Scotus as it is of their lady editor.

"The Dark Ages." What kind of a mind first called the age of St. Augustine, St. Anselm, Abelard and St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus the Dark Ages! It is sad to relate, but I know from experience that some of our university professors of philosophy still summarily dismiss the Middle Ages; they still nourish the modern illusion that medieval men concerned themselves with the numerical sum of angels poised pin-wise—and questions of like consequence.

Two good things happen for the Catholic who reads this book. One, he sees the roots of Whitehead, Dewey, Russell, and other moderns in their medieval progenitors. That's a good thing for anyone to see, Catholic or non-Catholic. But the second is especially good for Catholic students to see. And that is the intellectual background of St. Thomas. It is common and erroneous to picture St. Thomas descending on the minds of men like a streak of lightning. Heretics may do that; but not Doctors of the Church.

Much philosophical ground had been ploughed and sowed before St. Thomas came along. In the estimation of Holy Mother Church, it is he who reaped the harvest. But it is important to know that even he stood on men's shoulders. He patiently gleaned what was wheat from the mixed fields of the Arabs, the Jews, the Greeks, the Doctors of the Church, and innumerable Catholic philosophers.

Special attention is paid in this history of philosophy to the problem of the "universals," which is closely connected with the problem of "being." Also, to the question of man's freedom and man's fate; free-will and God's foreknowledge. Many texts are presented from the original works—some of them hard to obtain in ordinary libraries. A good book—not a soft one.

Michael David

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